

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

UNCLAS STATE 280704

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, UN

SUBJECT: UNGA FIFTH COMMITTEE - ACCOMMODATIONS AT NAIROBI
(AGENDA ITEM 100)

1. BUDGET ITEM. SYG'S REPORT (A/C.5/32/19) PROPOSES
APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE OF NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION, PROVID-
ING 18,348 SQUARE METERS OF SPACE FOR UN ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAM (UNEP) AND VARIOUS OTHER UN AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS
IN NAIROBI. CURRENT COST ESTIMATE IS 23.5 MILLION DOLLARS,
PLUS COST OF PLANNING UNIT. OF THIS AMOUNT SYG PROPOSES
4.5 MILLION DOLLARS, PLUS 315,000 DOLLARS FOR PLANNING
UNIT, BE ADDED TO 1978-1979 UN REGULAR BUDGET. NO PORTION
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OF THIS CONSTRUCTION COST WOULD BE PAID BY UNEP.

2. ACABQ REPORT. THE ACABQ REPORT ON THIS ITEM
(A/32/8/ADD.10) IS LARGELY A REHASH OF THE SYG'S REPORT SUM-
MARIZING PRESENT AND PROJECTED SPACE AVAILABILITIES,
COST ESTIMATES, AND CONFERENCE ROOM REQUIREMENTS. NO
REPEAT NO EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO EXAMINE INTO THE NEED

FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION OR TO DETERMINE WHAT OPTIONS MIGHT BE PLACED BEFORE THE UNGA. THE SYG'S COST ESTIMATES HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN ACCEPTED WITHOUT ANALYSIS. IN SHORT - A MAJOR DEPARTURE FROM THE USUALLY ANALYTICAL ACABQ OUTPUT - THE LACK OF SUBSTANCE IN THIS REPORT IS A

PERSUASIVE REASON FOR REFERRING THE SYG'S REPORT BACK TO THE ACABQ FOR FURTHER STUDY.

3. U.S. POSITION. THE ACABQ HAS CLEARLY FAILED TO EXAMINE ADEQUATELY THE MANY FACETS OF THIS PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION. IN THE INTEREST OF EFFECTIVE USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES, SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONSISTENCY IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION ARRANGEMENTS THE PROPOSAL SHOULD BE REFERRED BACK TO THE ACABQ FOR AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW AND A REPORT TO THE 33RD UNGA. USDEL SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR THIS MOVE. IN EVENT SYG'S PROPOSAL DOES COME UP FOR VOTE, USDEL SHOULD VOTE NO, WITH A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF VOTE REITERATING POSITION THAT APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION IN THE ABSENCE OF THOROUGH ACABQ EXAMINATION OF PROJECT IS IRRESPONSIBLE.

4. DISCUSSION.

A. ACABQ REPORT FAILS TO ADDRESS QUESTION OF PROPER OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT IN EVENT OF NEW CONSTRUCTION. SINCE (A) THE UN AND A NUMBER OF UN PROGRAMS WOULD OCCUPY UNCLASSIFIED

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NEW SPACE IN THE PROPOSED COMPLEX, (B) THE UN REGULAR BUDGET IS PROPOSED AS SOURCE OF CONSTRUCTION FUNDS, (C) MULTI-TENANTED BUILDINGS ELSEWHERE PROVIDE PRECEDENT, AND WOULD IT NOT

BE ADVISABLE FOR ANY NEW NAIROBI BUILDINGS TO BE UNITED NATIONS RATHER THAN UNEP FACILITIES? SHOULD UNEP KEEP TO ITS KNITTING RATHER THAN GET INTO THE REAL ESTATE AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT BUSINESS?

B. UN CONSTRUCTION IN GENEVA HAS BEEN FINANCED WITH CONCESSIONARY LOAN FROM SWISS GOVERNMENT. THE UNITED STATES PROVIDED INTEREST-FREE LOAN FOR NEW YORK HEAD-QUARTERS. VIENNA IS PAYING FULL CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND RENTING FOR ONE SCHILLING PER YEAR. FRANCE (WITH RESPECT TO UNESCO), UK (RE IMCO), AND CANADA (RE ICAO), JAPAN FOR (UNU) HAVE ALL PROVIDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BUILDINGS. WOULD IT NOT BE APPROPRIATE AND PROPER FOR KENYA TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING? THIS IS A QUESTION THAT THE ACABQ SHOULD EXPLORE.

C. MOST UN MEMBERS ARE TODAY FEELING A FINANCIAL PINCH AND, WE BELIEVE, WOULD AGREE THAT THE UN SYSTEM MUST MAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES. THE ACABQ, REPORT, HOWEVER, DOES NOT EXAMINE THE NEED FOR CONSTRUCT-

ING AN ELABORATE COMPLEX AT A COST OF AT LEAST DOLLARS 23 MILLION AND PROBABLY MORE WHEN THE CURRENT SO-CALLED TEMPORARY BUILDING MEETS HIGH STANDARDS AND CAN BE UTILIZED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. (TO THE EXTENT THAT SOME ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE IS NEEDED BY OTHER THAN THE UN AND UNEP, COMMERCIAL SPACE COULD BE RENTED.)

WE HAVE HEARD OPINIONS THAT THE PRESENT UNEP BUILDING IS MORE THAN SATISFACTORY AND UNDERSTAND THERE ARE QUESTIONS ABOUT SPENDING SCARCE RESOURCES TO CONSTRUCT AN UNNEEDED FACILITY THAT IS ALSO LAVISH BY NORMAL STANDARDS. WE WOULD LIKE THE ACABQ'S EXPERT AND OBJECTIVE OPINION ON THIS MATTER.

D. THE CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL IS NOT A BUILDING FOR UNEP.
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IT IS AN ELABORATE COMPLEX OF A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS. IT PROVIDES, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR: A RESTAURANT PLUS A CAFETERIA PLUS PRIVATE DINING ROOMS, PLUS CAFE/SNACK BAR; A VISITORS RECEPTION AREA, BRIEFING AREA AND SALES AREA; STUDIOS AND PHOTOLABS; A FIRE STATION; A MEDICAL CENTER; A MAJOR COMMUNICATIONS CENTER; A LAUNDRY, CLASSROOMS; CLUBROOMS AND MUCH MUCH MORE. YET THE ACABQ HAS MADE NO INVESTIGATION OF THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH A COMPLEX.

E. THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES SERVICES THAT APPEAR TO COMPETE WITH LOCAL SERVICES. WHY SHOULD A UNEP BUILDING, FOR EXAMPLE, PROVIDE FOR UPHOLSTERERS, MASONS, X-RAYS AND LAUNDRY? WE WOULD WELCOME ACABQ ANALYSIS OF THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS COMPETITION WITH LOCAL INDUSTRY.

F. THE CURRENT ESTIMATE OF CONSTRUCTION COST IS 23 MILLION PLUS. ACABQ SHOULD HAVE ANALYZED CAREFULLY THIS ESTIMATE WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINING WHETHER COST OVER-RUNS WILL NOT INCREASE THE FINAL COST SUBSTANTIALLY.

G. THE SYG'S REPORT CONTAINS NO ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF MAINTAINING THIS PROPOSED EXTENSIVE AND EXPENSIVE COMPLEX. THE FIFTH COMMITTEE AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ARE ENTITLED TO FULL INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER ELSE THEY ARE VOTING BLINDLY ON THE PROPOSAL. ACABQ'S EXPERT JUDGMENT IS ESSENTIAL. CHRISTOPHER

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